



City of New Britain

New Britain, Connecticut 06051

*"New Britain:
A City for
All People"*

NEW BRITAIN PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Bill DeMaio, Parks and Recreation Director, (860) 826-3364

Willow Street Park wins major award at 50th CRPA Conference

Mayor Timothy T. Stewart, Commission Chairman Jamie Giantonio and Vice Chairman Paul Shaker Sr. announced today that New Britain's own Willow Street Park won the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association's Facility of Merit Award, which was presented at the organization's 50th annual state conference on November 23rd. Members of the New Britain Parks and Recreation Department accepted the award in front of over 400 parks and recreation professionals from all over New England. The "Facility of Merit" award is presented annually to a parks and recreation department that has renovated or developed a recreation amenity. Willow Street Park opened on October 29, 2009 after facing many challenges in the pre-construction phases of the project, including a major soil detoxification cleanup that set back the construction timeline by 6 months.

"The key to the revitalization of the Oak Street neighborhood was the completion of Willow Street Park. Residents in the area wanted an anchor to the community, something that they could have and take pride in utilizing," said Mayor Timothy Stewart. "We wanted this park to be different from other parks in that it would cater to multiple generations of people," added Parks and Recreation Director Bill DeMaio. In addition to the standard basketball courts and play equipment, this five acre neighborhood park offers a wide variety of recreational activities including Bocce courts, shuffleboard, a 13-piece splash pad and a life sized chess and checker board. The park is also equipped with a state of the art surveillance system. Included in this system are "Mosquitos" that send out a high pitched sound that only youth under the age of 18 can hear in order to deter use after dark. Numerous video cameras are also hooked up to a web-

based surveillance system used by city officials and the police department to help curb vandalism, graffiti and other crime.

Already in 2010, there have been such programs as "Come for Fun", a lunchtime program intended for senior citizens to come to the park and play Bocce and shuffleboard as well as, Camp TotalRec, a widely popular summer camp run by the Parks and Recreation Department during the hot summer months. In addition, the New Britain Parks and Recreation Department co-sponsored the first annual Willow Street Park Festival, organized by the newly created Friends of Willow Street Park in July 2010. National Night Out, a nationwide program run locally by the New Britain Police Department to prevent crime and raise safety awareness, used Willow Street Park as a venue to attract over 1,000 people in early August 2010.

The pavilion and other features of the park are available for rental for large special events, birthday parties, or neighborhood gatherings. For rental inquiries, please contact the New Britain Parks and Recreation Department at: (860) 826-3360.

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